



**File Code:** 1950  
**Date:** July 14, 2015

Dear Interested Party,

You are invited to comment on the draft environmental assessment (EA) for the Thomas Creek Restoration Project proposed by the Walla Walla Ranger District, Umatilla National Forest. The Thomas Creek project planning area is approximately 15,800 acres in size and is located in Umatilla and Union Counties, Oregon, approximately 6 miles northwest of Elgin, Oregon. The legal location of the proposed project is within portions of T. 1 N. R. 37 E. sections 1, 2, and 12; T. 1 N. R. 38 E. sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12; T. 2 N. R. 37 E. sections 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 36; T. 2N. R. 38 E. sections 5, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35.

The District proposes several types of treatments to accomplish multiple resource objectives in the Upper Grande Ronde and Umatilla subbasins. The Thomas Creek Restoration Project draft EA analyzes a no action alternative and four action alternatives that would move the project area towards desired conditions and range of variation while increasing forest resiliency and contributing to meeting economic needs. Alternative B is the proposed action and proposes approximately 1,270 acres of commercial harvest, and approximately 1,276 acres of non-commercial thinning, and includes treatments in riparian habitat conservation areas. Additionally, 1,582 acres of landscape prescribed burning, use of 1.5 miles of temporary road, use of 14 miles of closed roads, and placement of large woody debris in streams are proposed. See attachment A for comparison of activities proposed by alternative.

For a complete description of the proposed action and alternatives and environmental analysis, please view the draft environmental assessment at the following internet address:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=43943>. To request a paper copy of the document, please see contact information listed below.

#### **Instructions for comments**

It is important that reviewers provide their comments at such times and in such a manner that they are useful to the agency's preparation of the environmental assessment. Therefore, comments should be provided prior to the close of the comment period and should clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns and comments. The submission of timely and specific comments can affect a reviewer's ability to participate in subsequent objection process or judicial review. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, anonymous comments will not provide the respondent with standing to participate in subsequent objection process or judicial review. Only those individuals who submit written comments specific to the project during a designated comment period for the draft environmental assessment will have standing to file an objection (36 CFR 21 8.7).

Comments can be mailed to the Responsible Official: Mike Rassbach, District Ranger, at 1415 W. Rose St, Walla Walla, WA 99362, or by fax to (509) 522-6000.

Electronic comments must be submitted as part of the actual e-mail message or as an attachment in Microsoft Word, rich text format (.rtf), or portable document format (.pdf) only and sent to: [comments-](#)



[pacificnorthwest-umatilla-wallawalla@fs.fed.us](mailto:pacificnorthwest-umatilla-wallawalla@fs.fed.us). [mailto:](#)In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for objection standing. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed above, in other formats than those listed, or containing viruses will not be accepted.

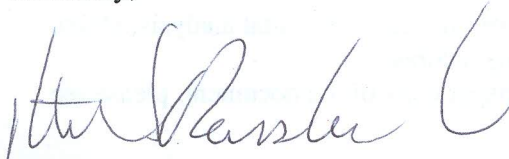
For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of the comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

The publication of the legal notice in the East Oregonian is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for a proposed action in an environmental assessment. Comments will be accepted for 30 days following the date of publication of the legal notice. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

If you have questions or would like a copy of the draft environmental assessment, please contact Holly Hutchinson, Environmental Coordinator, [hollyahutchinson@fs.fed.us](mailto:hollyahutchinson@fs.fed.us), or Holly Harris, Wildlife Biologist, [hollyharris@fs.fed.us](mailto:hollyharris@fs.fed.us), Walla Walla Ranger District, 1415 West Rose, Walla Walla, WA 99362, phone (509) 522-6290.

I appreciate the interest you have shown in this project and request your continued assistance in the management of forest resources in the Thomas Creek area.

Sincerely,



MIKE RASSBACH  
District Ranger

*Attachment: Comparison of activities proposed by alternative.*



**Attachment A.** Comparison of activities proposed by alternative.

Activity		Alternative			
		B	C	D	E
<i>Silvicultural Treatments (Acres)</i>					
Clearcut		25	25	25	25
Seedtree		97	84	82	97
Group Shelterwood		240	240	240	240
Shelterwood		65	65	45	65
Variable Density- Regen		306	289	279	306
Variable Density		181	168	165	181
Riparian Restoration		28	0	0	28
Intermediate- commercial		328	322	114	850
Intermediate- NCT		238	238	431	238
NCT		1,037	1,032	1,037	1,037
Edge – Hardwood		0	72	0	0
Edge + Hardwood		0	65	0	0
No Edge – Hardwood (monitoring only)		0	77	0	0
No Edge + Hardwood (monitoring only)		0	62	0	0
No Go (control/monitoring only)		0	62	0	0
<b>Total commercial treatment</b>		1,270	1,330	949	1,793
<b>Total non-commercial treatment</b>		1,276	1,270	1,468	1,276
<b>Total historic Ponderosa pine plantation treated</b>		942	870	836	942
<i>Soil Restoration (Acres)</i>					
Subsoiling		400	400	400	400
<i>Vegetation Treatments in Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (Acres)</i>					
Category 1 RHCA (non-commercial)		172	172	134	172
Category 2 RHCA (commercial)		28	5	0	28
Category 2 RHCA (non-commercial)		101	100	102	101
Category 4 RHCA (commercial)		155	145	0	155
Category 4 RHCA (non-commercial)		234	233	370	234
<b>Total commercial RHCA treatments</b>		183	150	0	183
<b>Total non-commercial RHCA treatments</b>		507	505	606	507
<i>Fuels Treatments (Acres)</i>					
Hand	Lop and scatter	1,276	1,270	1,468	1,276
	Hand pile	38	38	38	60
Mechanical	Landing pile	923	925	578	1221

	Activity	Alternative			
		B	C	D	E
	Grapple pile	347	403	371	572
Prescribed Fire	Pile burn hand and grapple piles	385	441	409	632
	Pile burn landing piles	923	925	578	1,221
	Jack-pot burn	305	305	285	305
	Broadcast burn	122	109	107	122
	Landscape burn	1,582	1,582	1,582	1,582
<i>Transportation and Access (Miles)</i>					
	Newly constructed temporary roads	1	1	0	1
	Temporary roads constructed on existing template	0.5	0.5	0	0.5
	Closed roads re-opened	14	14	11	14